There are many opportunities to grow and develop while studying at SFU. Your student will have the chance to express their independence and to learn beyond the classroom. Even the most exciting changes can be stressful though, and by knowing what to expect you will be better able to support your student as they begin their studies.

**WHAT TO EXPECT**

**Identity Building**

Identity Building aside from the change in physical environment, students will be exposed to unfamiliar cultures, perspectives and beliefs. They may start to question their own values. Identities and ways of thinking. This can be an exciting transition but can be confusing and difficult to communicate to their family and familiar friends.

**Expression of Independence**

It may seem that your student is acting like a different person and doing things that are out of character. They are going through lots of changes and adjusting to new responsibilities, new relationships and new freedoms. They may start to push at the boundaries that you have set for them.

**Excitement**

Entering a new environment, meeting new people, exploring new interests and passions and experiencing a level of independence, freedom and flexibility they have never had access to before.
Particularly in November and February, students (and 20% of the general population) can experience winter blues. This might be compounded by other stresses and can include low mood, fatigue, irritability, changes in eating patterns, and less energy to do the things they would normally enjoy.

The volume and level of academic work may be higher than it was in high school for your student. It may also be a challenge to develop independent initiative and self-discipline now that they are not being monitored by their teachers. They may struggle to develop schedules and study habits without the structure they are used to.

Meeting new friends is exciting, but as their initial excitement wears off, students can encounter conflict with their peers, classmates and roommates. Maintaining new connections can be stressful, especially without being able to rely on familiar family, friends and other supports to navigate these new relationships.

Even if you are helping your student with their bills, they can experience a great deal of anxiety over money. They may have encountered unexpected costs, be worried about paying for future fees and tuition, or feel that they are a financial burden to their family.

Students may feel anxious about academic performance, connecting with peers, and returning home for the holidays. They may fear disappointing their family and friends and may worry about fitting into old roles and norms.

Don’t Forget To Take Care Of Yourself!

This is a period of adjustment for you too. Your mixed feelings of joy and sorrow, pride and loss, are normal. And remember that your student still needs you and loves you, even if they don’t say it!
How Can You Help Your Student Adjust To Their Studies?

Determine a Communication Plan TODAY: respect time differences and don’t expect instant responses.
Encourage them to meet the SFU Advisors and get to know them by name.
Encourage involvement on campus to promote a balanced life outside of classroom study.
Determine financial support plan NOW to avoid unexpected problems.
Listen and help them to advocate for themselves: don’t try to fix things for them.
Remind them they are not alone and encourage them to use any of the many support services SFU offers.
Remember they are here to develop and grow and that means they will change.
Be proud of their development and tell them that often.

FAQ’s

What information can I get from SFU about how my child is doing?
It is very important that you establish a communication plan with your student before the term begins. Due to BC’s Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act: we are very limited in what we can tell you about your student’s experience here at SFU because doing so would be in violation of BC law.

IS SFU a safe community?
Campus Safety & Security Services is committed to engaging our community to make SFU a safe and secure environment to live, learn, and work. Campus Security offers 24/7 emergency response, as well as other safety programs, including Safe Walk, Emergency Phones, and the student-run Campus Crime Stoppers hotline. For more information visit their website at www.sfu.ca/srs/security

Who Do I Call in an Emergency?

Campus Security
778.782.4500 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Residence and Housing Office
Residence Administration Building A1001
8888 University Drive SFU
Burnaby BC, V5A 1S6
778.782.4201
housing@sfu.ca

SFU Support Services & Resources:

Health and Counselling Services
www.sfu.ca/students/health/

Student Library Learning Commons
www.lib.sfu.ca/about/branchesdepts/slc

Interfaith Centre
www.sfu.ca/students/interfaith

SFU Recreation
www.sfu.ca/students/recreation

SFU Residence and Housing
www.sfu.ca/students/residences

SFU Security
www.sfu.ca/srs/security